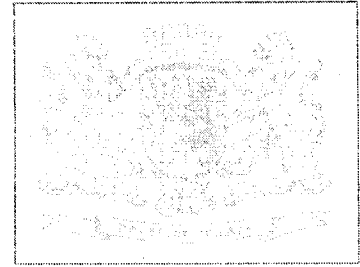


# TOWN OF GUILDERLAND

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Stephen J. Feeney, Chairman  
& Town Planning Board

**FROM:** Kenneth Kovalchik, AICP, Town Planner

**Date:** December 7, 2018

**SUBJ:** Rapp Road Development, LLC – 222 Apartment/Townhome Units – Rapp Road (Crossgates Mall)  
**Preliminary Site Plan Review and Subdivision Concept Review**

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### Introduction

The project is scheduled for preliminary site plan review for a proposed 16 unit apartment complex and concept review of a minor subdivision on your December 12, 2018 Planning Board agenda. The documents included in your Board packets for this application are as follows:

- Town Planner staff memo dated December 7, 2018
- Site plan application, minor subdivision plan application and SEQR EAF
- Site plans dated November 13, 2018
- Subdivision application and Subdivision Plan dated November 13, 2018
- Project Narrative
- Phase I Archaeological Investigation dated July 2018 and prepared by Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc.
- Engineer's Report dated November 19, 2018 and prepared by The Chazen Companies
- Traffic Impact Study dated November 14, 2018 and prepared by Maser Consulting, P.A.

### Preliminary Site Plan Review

The applicant is proposing to construct a total of 222 apartment and townhome units on 19.68 +/- acres in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District. The site is located on the west side of Crossgates Mall and southwest of the intersection of Gipp Road and Rapp Road. The municipal line with the City of Albany borders the north side of the site. Three 2-story townhouse style buildings, consisting of 10 units in each building, are proposed on the west side of the property. Access into the site will be via a boulevard designed roadway. On each side of the boulevard entrance road the applicant is proposing to construct two 5-story buildings. The building on the north side of the boulevard will contain 98 apartment units and the building on the south side of the boulevard will contain 94 apartment units. A total of 333 parking spaces are required and the applicant is proposing to install 405 parking spaces. Each of the 5-story apartment buildings will accommodate 27 indoor parking spaces and each of the townhome buildings will accommodate 10 indoor parking spaces. The remaining parking spaces will be surface parking.

The "Purpose" section of §280-18A of Town Zoning Law (Transit Oriented Development District) encourages the following:

#### **Pedestrian Linkages**

The "Purpose" section of §280-18A of Town Zoning Law (Transit Oriented Development District) encourages pedestrian linkages. The applicant is proposing to construct an 8' wide multi-use path from the project site to Western Avenue, along the west side of Rapp Road and Johnston Road. The applicant is proposing a 5' wide bike path/walkway extending from the project site to the north, on the west side of Rapp Road, and connecting to the Crossgates Mall ring road. The site plans also depict a future extension of the bike path/walkway on the east side of Rapp Road, extending north from the project site and connecting with the Crossgates Mall ring road.

#### **Improving Non-automobile Oriented Modes of Transportation**

One of the reasons for adoption of the TOD District around the Crossgates Mall site is related to the proposed CDTA/Crossgates Transit Center. The existing Crossgates Mall transit stop is the busiest in the CDTA system. Once completed a rider will be able to travel from Crossgates Mall to downtown Albany in approximately 10 minutes. The TOD District encourages compact, high density development within walking distance to the transit center with the goal of encouraging use of the bus system vs. automobiles. The applicant is also proposing a CDTA bus stop in front of the project site to allow for easier access of residents to utilize the CDTA bus system. The CDTA improvements, coupled with the proposed pedestrian linkages, indicate the applicant is encouraging non-automobile modes of transportation.

#### **Supporting Mixed-use Buildings**

The applicant is proposing two styles of residences, apartments and townhomes. The applicant is proposing to incorporate approximately 4,300 square feet of commercial space in the apartment buildings.

#### **Compact Development**

For buildings located greater than 150' from a residential district the building height in the TOD District can increase to 55' in height. All apartment and townhome buildings are located greater than 150' from a residential district. Allowing a building height to increase to 55' in height allows density to increase vertically and not horizontally, thus preserving more green space.

#### **Subdivision**

The site currently consists of four separate parcels under Crossgates Mall ownership. The applicant is proposing to consolidate all four parcels into one parcel. Typically this could be handled as a lot line amendment, but considering a sewer extension is proposed as part of the development it requires the need to process the application as a subdivision.

#### **Town Designated Engineer**

The Town will utilize the services of a Town Designated Engineer (TDE) to review site plan items such as the stormwater management plan and traffic impact study. The Planning Department recommends using Delaware Engineering as the TDE for this project. Delaware Engineering was the TDE for the Crossgates Mall hotel project and is the TDE for the current McKownville drainage improvement project. Delaware Engineering has an intimate knowledge of the stormwater and drainage issues in this area, and for these reasons is recommended as the TDE.

**Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council**

Considering a subdivision application is included as part of the application a review by the Conservation Advisory Council is required. The application will be reviewed at their December 10, 2018 meeting.

**Albany Pine Bush Preserve**

The site is located in an area designated as "Recommended Partial Protection" by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission primarily related to habitat for the Karner Blue Butterfly located in the northeast corner of the site. No development is proposed in this area. A copy of the application materials will be sent to the Commission for review and comment.

**Albany County Planning Board**

Considering the project is located within 500' from a municipal boundary (City of Albany) the project will be referred to the Albany County Planning Board for their December 20, 2018 Board meeting.

**City of Albany**

Considering the site is located within 500' of a municipal boundary with the City of Albany a copy of the application will be sent to the City for review and comment.

**Next Steps**

- The Planning Board should provide preliminary site plan and subdivision comments to the applicant for any Planning Board requested design changes.
- Execute an escrow agreement between the applicant and TDE for engineering review services.
- The TDE and Planning Department will provide review comments to the applicant.